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ABSTRACT

Two-thirds of the 33,000 residents of Shawano County, Wisconsin, live in rural areas; agricultural interests comprise 30% of the employment economy. Inventories of Extension programs from 1960 to 1975 and telephone interviews with county and community leaders and a random sample of 1192 county residents yielded data for this survey. Most adults (76%) had contact with Extension, and a large majority of citizens and leaders judged it positively. Of the various approaches to implementing major programs, the mass media was the most effective at reaching more people. Individuals, groups and communities all benefitted from Extension's informational resources, facility development, and resource data on community concerns. Other conclusions were that Extension lacked sufficient identity in the county and the community leaders wanted to be more involved in program determination and evaluation. Specific findings indicated ten general implications for Extension programming, including that Extension must: (1) determine the optimum balance between "some" contact with most people and "intensive" contact with fewer people; (2) decide on the extent of responsibility for assisting people who do not usually seek help; and (3) use strategic combinations of meetings, mass media, committee and individual contacts in sequential, continuous programming. (DS)

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Mary G. Marshall

2

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Laverne Forest was county agricultural agent in Minnesota for eight years prior to assuming his current role as Evaluation Specialist in Program and Staff Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension. He is an associate professor in Continuing and Vocational Education on the Madison campus.

Mary Marshall is research assistant with Program and Staff Development, University of Wisconsin-Madison, in a doctoral program in continuing education. She was Extension Area Youth Specialist in Missouri for nine years.

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Laverne B. Forest
Mary G. Marshall

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Contents

Introduction 5

Conclusions 9

1. Most adults in Shawano have contact with Extension. 10
2. Extension uses various approaches to implement major programs. 13
3. Individuals, groups, and communities all benefit from Extension. 16
4. Citizens and leaders make positive judgments about Extension. 21
5. Extension lacks sufficient image and identity in Shawano County. 23
6. Leaders want to be more involved in program determination and evaluation. 25
7. Program evaluation criteria are vague and inconsistent. 28

Implications 31

1. Extension must decide the optimum balance between *some* contact with most people and *intensive* contact with fewer people. 32
2. Extension must decide on the extent of its responsibility for assisting people who do not usually seek help. 33
3. Extension must use strategic combinations of meetings, mass media, committee, and individual contacts in sequential, continuous programming. 34
4. A county program must be defined as combined efforts of local agents *and* other statewide and district faculty. 35
5. Extension must attend to problems of individuals and to concerns needing group or governmental action. 36
6. Extension must focus more on the needs of the "whole" person. 37
7. Extension must address specific immediate concerns of individuals and communities and help people relate outcomes to larger goals. 38
8. Extension must recognize the difficulty in setting program priorities when communities and individuals are truly involved. 39
9. Criteria for evaluating programs must be clarified. 40
10. Understanding of Extension must be increased by giving people more opportunity to be involved. 41

Additional Materials 43

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Introduction

Impact

What impact does Extension have in a county? How many people have had a contact with Extension forceful enough for them to recall it? What impression did contact with Extension leave—what resulted and how did people react? How much impact do leaders feel Extension is having in their county?

These are the main questions of the Shawano County evaluation. This report summarizes major findings and implications, and lists additional available materials.

The Evaluation

A Wisconsin district director's request "to know the impact of Extension in a county," coupled with the Extension Service/USDA's interest in exploring methods, resulted in the development of this project.

The purposes of the study were:

1. To increase understanding both among Extension personnel and external influentials of how various program areas fit together in their overall use by a total county population.
2. To determine the overall results of Extension efforts in a county.
3. To increase understanding on how evidence can be secured, communicated and used effectively in such an overall evaluation.

Shawano County was selected because it is fairly typical of other rural counties in the North Central region of the United States. Furthermore, it has had sufficient tenure in several program areas for there to be measurable results, having average or above average program quality in most areas.

The Shawano County study pilots a macro-evaluation of Extension effectiveness at the county level. Highest priority was given to collecting data about Extension as a whole over 15 years, regardless of program area. Second priority went to collecting data about specific clientele types, such as farmers, elderly men and women, professional personnel, businesspersons. Third priority went to measuring specific programs and projects.

The evaluation concentrated on perceptions of end-results, people involvement, and reactions. Evidence was also secured on methods and specific results. The data collection procedures included:

1. Program inventories. Comprehensive descriptions of Extension programs from 1960-1975 were prepared. These reviews gave a record of programs conducted, subjects presented and approximate attendance, providing an overview of major and minor efforts in agriculture, 4-H, home economics, resource development and others.
2. Leader survey. 238 county and community leaders were interviewed. Persons holding public office on local and county levels and those named by people in the community as influentials were included.

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3. Total county survey. A random sample of 1192 residents 18 and older were interviewed. They closely resembled the census characteristics for the county. Respondents feeling they'd had "some" or "a lot" of contact with Extension were asked a greater number of questions and will be referred to in this report as "considerable contact" respondents.

Both surveys were conducted by telephone in January and February of 1976 using trained University of Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory interviewers. The two surveys used the same basic framework.

For further details on methodology, see Booklet II in this series.

Shawano County, Wisconsin

Shawano County is located in north central Wisconsin, with rolling agricultural land in the east and forested, recreational areas of lakes and streams in the central and western parts.

Two-thirds of the 33,000 residents live in rural areas, including ten villages whose populations are between 235-995. The city of Shawano, which is also the county seat, has 6,500 residents. It is a primary trade center in mid-county, although Wausau and Green Bay in adjoining counties draw on trade and recreational interests.

The predominant ethnic background is German. Three percent of the population are Native American; the Stockbridge-Munsees have a reservation in the county. In the southeast, some communities have a Polish heritage.

Fourteen percent of the residents are 65 or older. Median family income is below the state average.

Agricultural interests comprise 30% of the employment economy, while 15% are in manufacturing. The professions (primarily education, medicine and law) have 14% of persons employed; 23% are in clerical and sales occupations. Ten percent are in governmental service and 12% in skilled and semi-skilled jobs.

Agriculture is predominantly dairy farming, with 45,000 cows returning more than $31 million gross income in 1974. Forage and fiber for dairy cows is produced on about 350,000 acres. Western Shawano County has a large lumber industry. Agricultural enterprises include food packaging, a large breeding cooperative, dairy marketing co-ops, whey drying, and processing of cheese, butter, milk, and maple syrup.

Business has diversified in recent years to include textile and metal industries. The new Shawano Regional Industrial Park of 195 acres is increasing opportunity for new jobs and economic development.

Local government consists of ten village councils, 25 town boards and the 30-member County Board of Supervisors. The equalized valuation of Shawano County was $339,685,600 in 1973.

Extension Work in Shawano County

Although state specialists had worked with county residents for several years, the first Extension appointment to Shawano County was in 1917. Currently there are five Extension agents based in Shawano. At the time of this study, their positions and tenure were as follows: Agricultural Agent, 20 years (changed just prior to surveying); 4-H Youth Agent, more than 20 years; Home Economist, 1½ years; 4-H Youth/EFNEP, 2 years (changed during the study); and Resource Development Agent, 10 years.

Other University faculty provide access to programs originating outside the county. Area and state specialists, including those based on campuses, offer educational activities through workshops, mass media, and Educational Telephone Network (ETN) in the wide range of subjects available from the University of Wisconsin.

Shawano County drew upon general Extension services for courses, workshops and conferences for years prior to the forming of University Extension in 1967.*

Although some programming from all 13 Extension program areas reaches Shawano County people, the major emphasis locally has been on:

Agriculture—dairy and livestock, crops and soils, forestry, farm management, building and equipment, horticulture, and conservation.

Home Economics—family living, housing, interpersonal relations, consumer resource management, food and nutrition, crafts and cultural arts, Extension Homemaker Clubs and 4-H projects, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP).

4-H and Youth—citizenship, recreation, leadership development in more than 50 project areas (animal science, mechanics, natural and health sciences, communication, cultural arts, home and family, political and social sciences, plants and soils).

Community Resource Development—leadership, business and industry, environmental resources, recreation, governmental process, land use planning and housing.

Continuing Education for Professionals—(credit or non-credit) the arts, business, education, social work, public affairs, law, government and community development, health, agriculture, women's and family living, and communications.

*Wisconsin differs from most other states in that one overall program and organization encompasses all of the Extension of the total University of Wisconsin system. The 13 program areas include Agriculture and Agri Business, Business and Industry, Communications, Engineering-Mathematics-Applied Sciences, Extension Programs in Education, Government and Community Development, Family Living Education, Health Sciences, Human Resource Development, Natural and Environmental Resources, Social Services, School for Workers, and Youth Development.

Conclusions

In this part of the report, many specific evidences, when categorized, support seven major conclusions.

The conclusions and implications summarize major results of the Shawano County evaluation. Because relationships between specific findings, conclusions, and implications may not be readily apparent, consider the results of the evaluation as existing on a continuum from specific to general. This material represents various points along that continuum.

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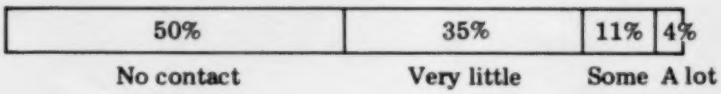
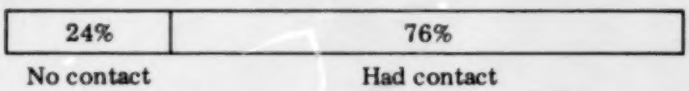
1. Most adults in Shawano County have contact with Extension.

- Most adults in Shawano county had contact with Extension over the past 10 to 15 years.

  50% of adults recalled contact with Extension; 15% felt they'd had considerable contact:

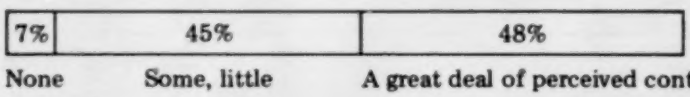


  In further probing, however, about half of those not remembering contact actually did have some kind of contact, thus resulting in a total of 76%:



  Generalizing to the 21,000 adults living in Shawano County, this means that over 10,000 participated in Extension programs at some time during the past 15 years.

- Most community and county leaders perceived having Extension contact.



- Considerable contact with Extension was highly related to contact through 4-H.

  Among considerable contact respondents (15% of total):

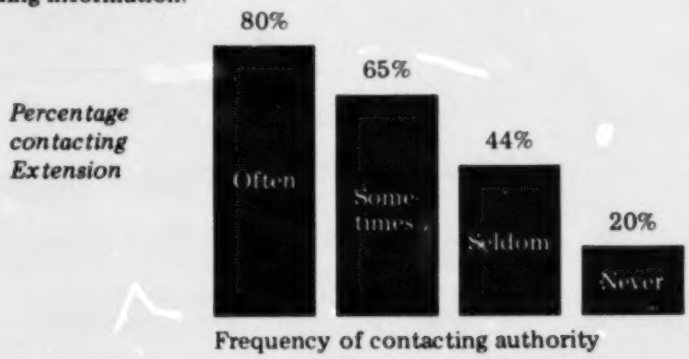
  45% had children in 4-H at some time.
  39% were former 4-H members.
  31% were 4-H leaders or resource people at some time.
  27% belonged to a Homemaker Club.
  12% had contact with a business resource in Extension.
  8% had children who took part in Summer Food Fun.
  3% took part in special programs for Native Americans.
  2% were in EFNEP.
  1% participated in School for Workers.
  1% were in Mother Moppets program.

- Many contacts with Extension were through activities originating outside the county.

  28% viewed Extension television programs.
  19% heard Extension radio programs by agents from other counties.
  15% attended Farm Progress Days or similar events.
  12% attended Extension courses or workshops.
  10% heard programs via state Extension radio.
  4% used Educational Telephone Network (ETN).
  3% took part in Independent Study (Extension correspondence courses).

  Distance prevents participation for some, but not for others. A fourth of those with little or no contact said it wouldn't be hard to attend a meeting in another county, 7% said they could go elsewhere in the state for an Extension event.

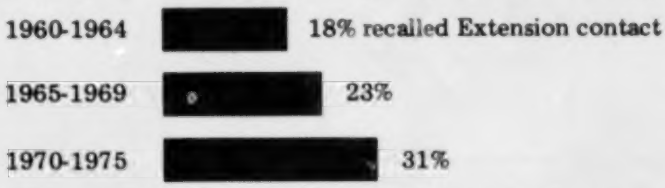
- Contact with Extension was associated with frequency of contacting an authority when needing information.



  Contacting an authority was also significantly associated with age, education, income, and occupation.

- Respondents had greater contact with Extension within the past 5 years.

  Contact recalled by total county survey respondents over time periods:

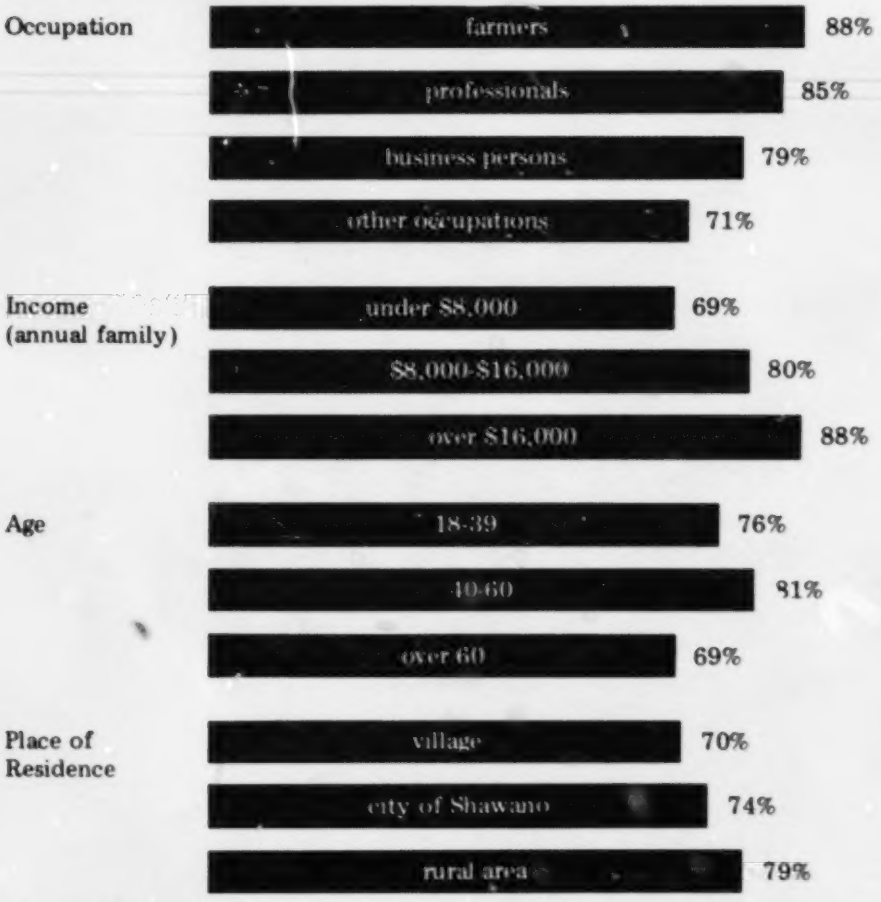


  In addition, there were respondents who had contact but did not recall it initially as being with Extension.

  Contact recalled by leaders surveyed:

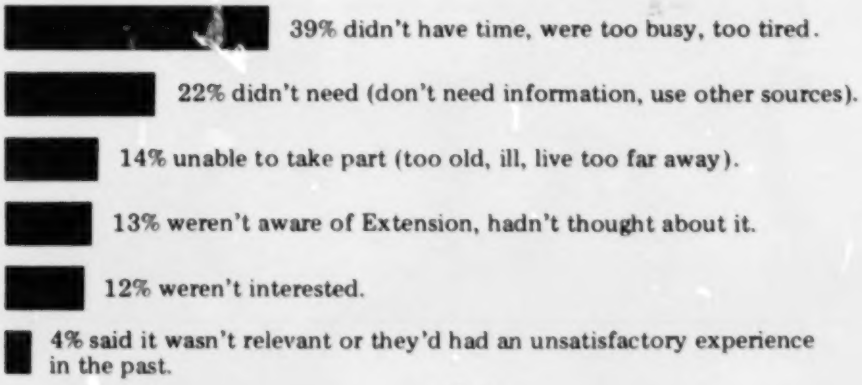
- Extension reached almost all groups, although significant differences existed for certain demographic characteristics.

Percent of total county survey respondents contacting Extension



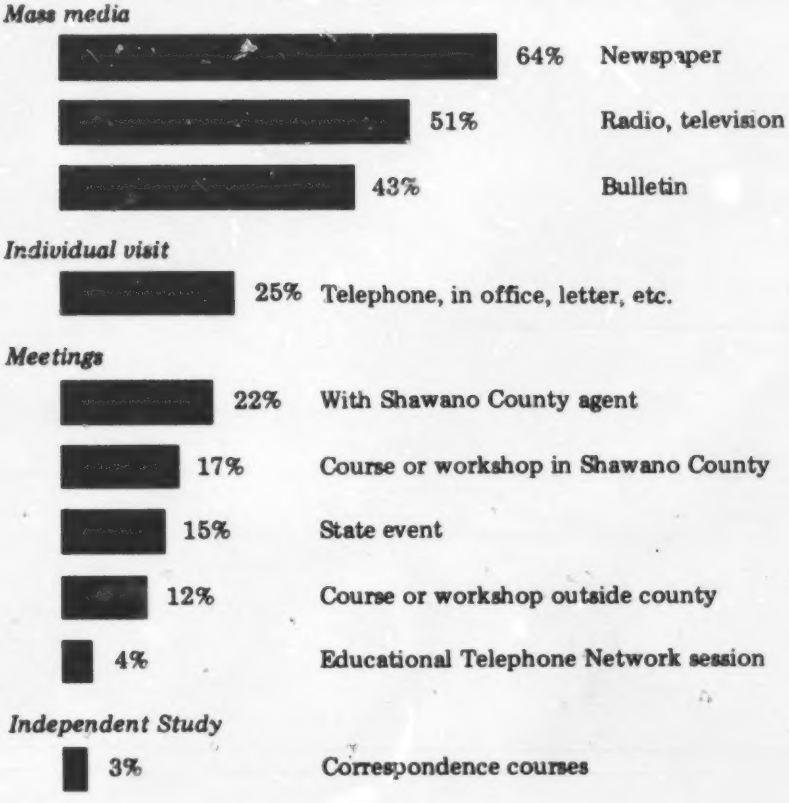
No apparent differences in participation related to sex or ethnic background.

- Persons having little or no Extension contact said they didn't know about it or didn't need it.


39% didn't have time, were too busy, too tired.
22% didn't need (don't need information, use other sources).
14% unable to take part (too old, ill, live too far away).
13% weren't aware of Extension, hadn't thought about it.
12% weren't interested.
4% said it wasn't relevant or they'd had an unsatisfactory experience in the past.

2. Extension uses various approaches to implement major programs.

- More people reported being reached by mass media than by other techniques.



- Mass media reached many who didn't have other kinds of contact.

76% had contact, 29% only through mass media.

Those who were more likely to have had *only* mass media contact:

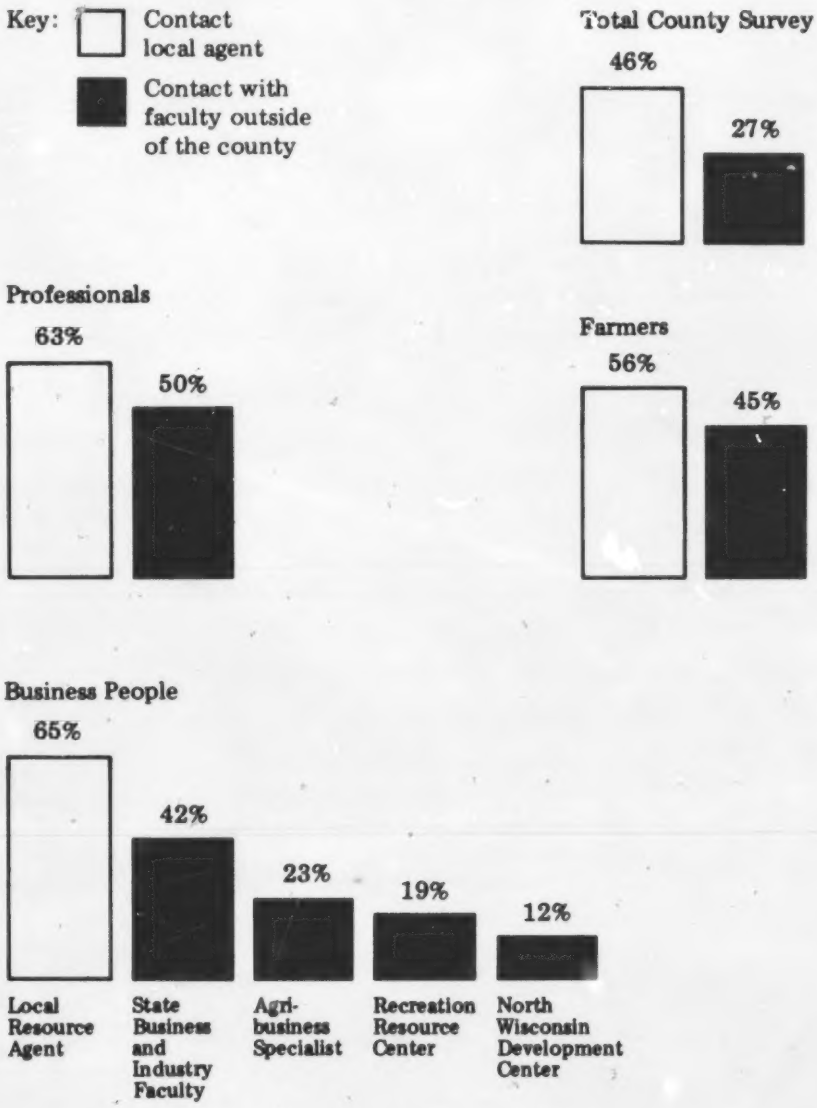
Village residents (39%).
People over age 60 (38%).
Less than high school education (38%).
Minority ethnic background (38% Native Americans).
Those with incomes less than $8,000 (35%).
Those who seldom or never contact an authority (35%).
Women not in the labor force (34%).

- Much Extension information was transmitted through friends and relatives.

  82% of those with considerable Extension contact said they shared information with other people—39% shared with more than 15 people.

  20% of those with little or no Extension contact said relatives or friends shared Extension information with them.

- Many adults remembered contact with statewide faculty as well as with county personnel.



- Leaders wanted Extension to be involved in certain programs from start to finish.

Crucial roles of Extension personnel as perceived by leaders (multiple responses included):	*Program*		
	Land use Planning & zoning	Industrial development	Outdoor Recreation Development
Calling meetings	16%	14%	24%
Conducting meetings	18	9	4
Coordinating groups	4	0	7
Identifying problems	11	17	13
Presenting solutions	9	3	7
Presenting alternatives	7	6	6
Presenting facts & opinions	16	20	15
Getting resources	9	17	20
Other	5	3	0
None is crucial	2	9	2
ALL ARE CRUCIAL	53	29	37

- Extension programs were sequential year-to-year activities.

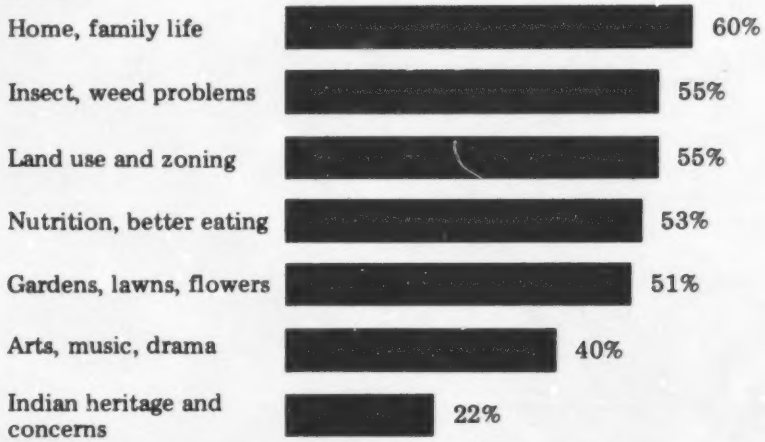
  Within any one year, records of Extension's program activities showed little connection, but when program inventories were analyzed from year-to-year, major relationships were identified between events, which resulted in much time given to specific content areas.

  For example, the resource agent felt little had been done with business. Yet between 1968-75 many specific things had been done including main street renewal, surveys of problems, shoplifting clinics, and small business management consultations. In addition, beginning with a recreation inventory, many planning efforts were conducted that ultimately increased the recreational facilities in Shawano County.

3. Individuals, groups, and communities all benefit from Extension.

- People saw Extension as providing many kinds of information.

  Respondents having considerable contact (N=174) got various information:

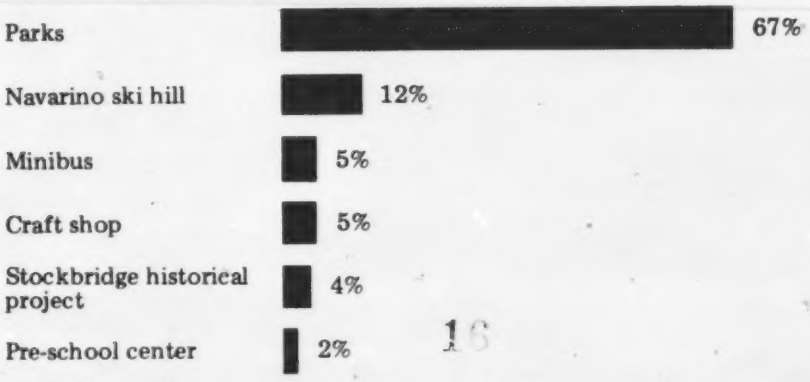


  Among considerable contact respondents, over half (55%) got information on four or more topics asked about in the survey:

  20% of the women got only homemaking information, while 20% who got information secured it on topics other than homemaking. 60% got homemaking information plus subjects related to occupation, gardening, community affairs, etc.
  80% of the farmers secured information from Extension on subjects other than farming. 94% got farming information or service (soil tests, for example).

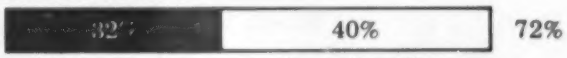
- Extension helped local groups develop many facilities used by Shawano County residents.

  Among the facilities Extension helped to develop, the parks were the most apt to have been used. All other facilities were oriented toward a more limited clientele. For example, the pre-school center would be used only by those in the Shawano city area who had pre-school children.



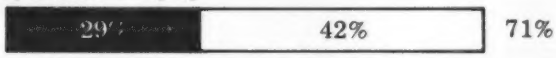
- Considerable contact respondents reported they received benefits from Extension in several ways.

Educational resources



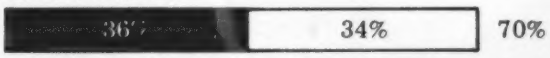
A respondent gave this example: "Improved my functioning as an administrator. Helped me improve the quality of education in the community."

Home, health or safety



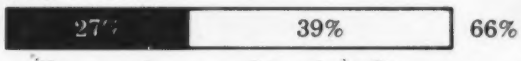
Another example from the survey: "I felt the broader knowledge of nutrition makes for a better and healthier family."

Individual abilities



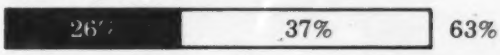
"I took a course for store clerks. It helped us with thinking quicker, how to treat customers, and how to do a better job."

Natural environment



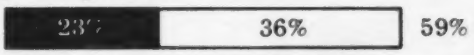
"Helping in the community—our 4-H projects to beautify things."

Economic improvement



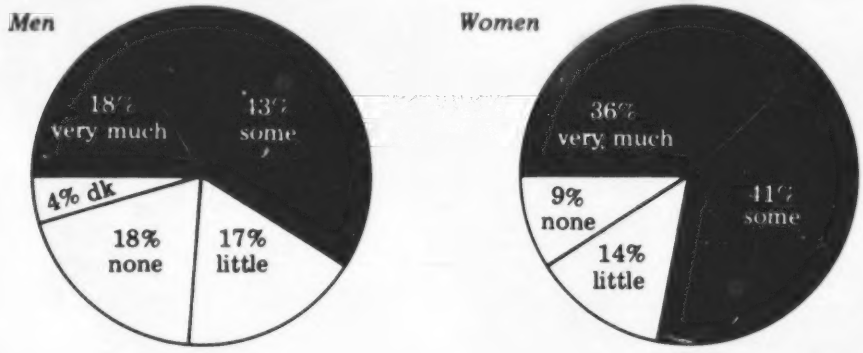
"Information on farm problems which helped me improve my farm and and output."

Groups and government

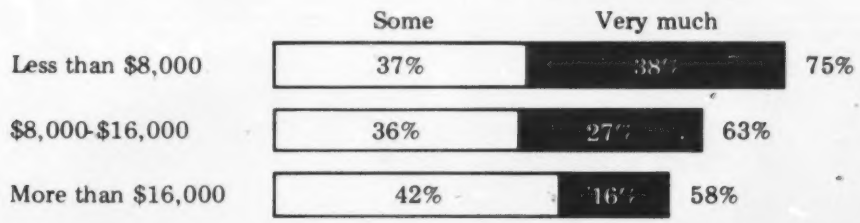


"Received help about county and local government. I learned about government structure and policy and could make more valid decisions."

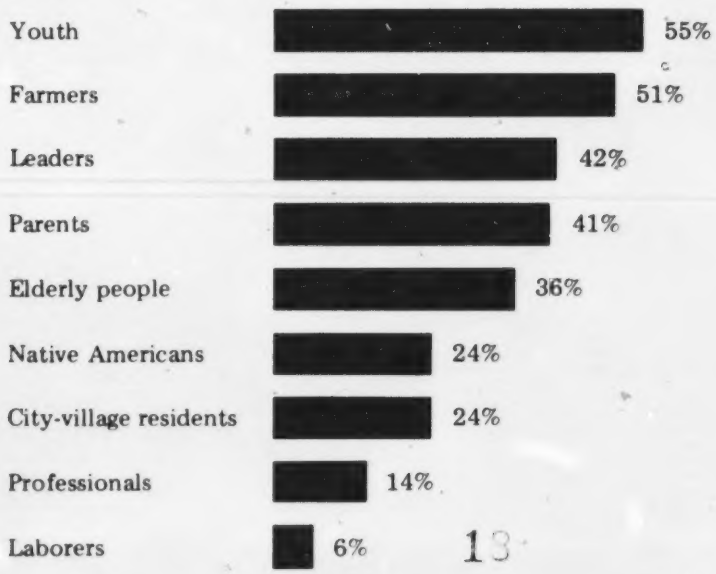
- Both men and women felt they and their families received home, health and safety benefits.



- Lower-income persons with considerable Extension contact perceived economic benefits from Extension.

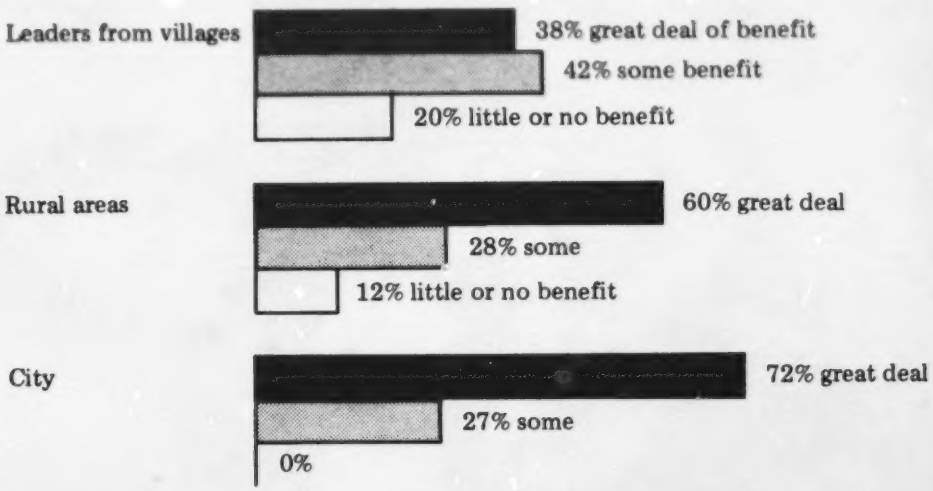


- Leaders felt Extension's traditional audiences received more benefit than did other audiences.



Leaders' perception of benefits to *farmers* varied according to where the leaders lived.

Amount of benefits to farmers from Extension



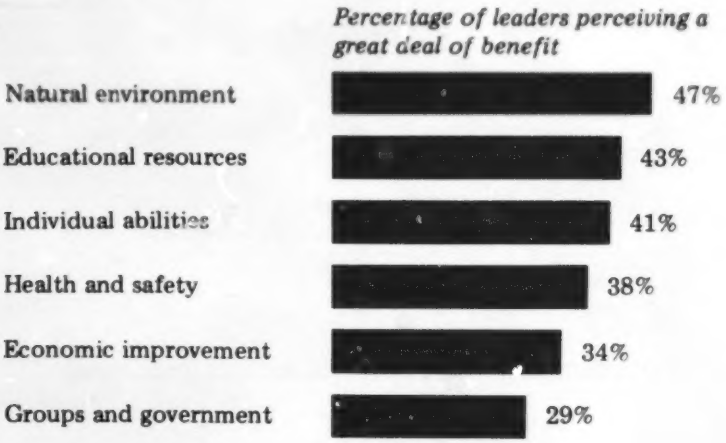
- Extension had an impact on several community problems and concerns.

  A majority of leaders said they used Extension as a resource for three community concerns:

Extension was also seen as a key influence on how leaders felt about the three concerns.

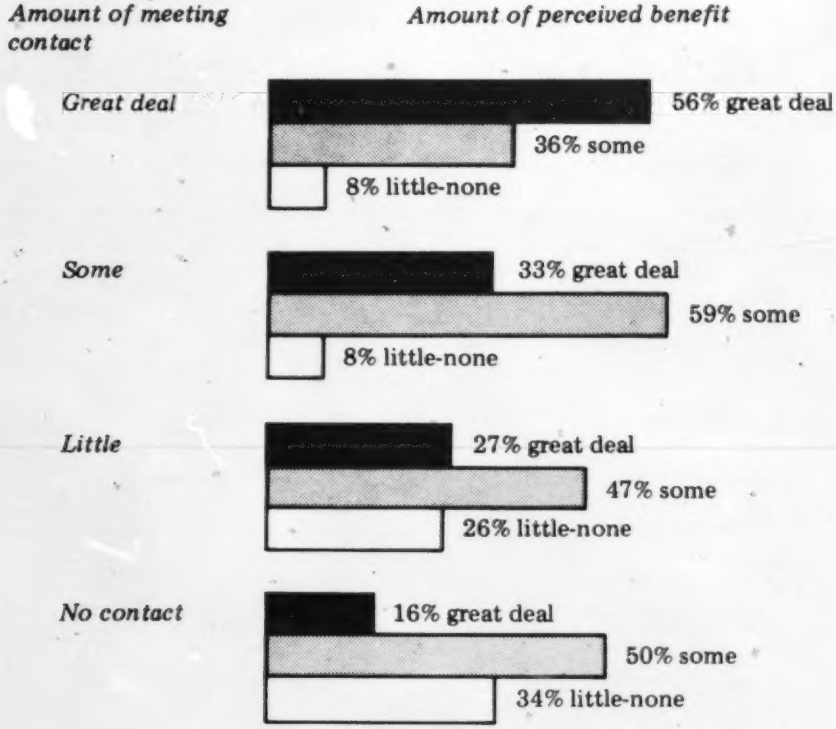
Persons who influenced leaders	*Program* Land Use Planning	Industrial Development	Recreation Development
Extension person	46%	23%	32%
Elected official	16	15	7
Bureau person	21	3	25
Planning commission	5	0	0
Business person/enterprise	2	36	11
Club or organization	0	3	7
Friend or neighbor	2	0	0
No one	30	38	32

- Leaders perceived several types of benefits to communities and the county as a result of Extension work.



- The leaders' perceptions of the amount of benefit depended on several factors.

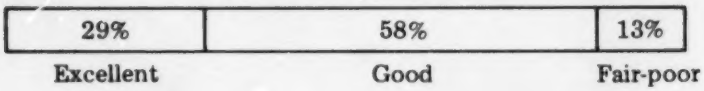
  Perception of benefits to *groups and government*, for example, varied according to the amount of contact the leaders had in meetings with local Extension agents.



4. Citizens and leaders make positive judgments about Extension.

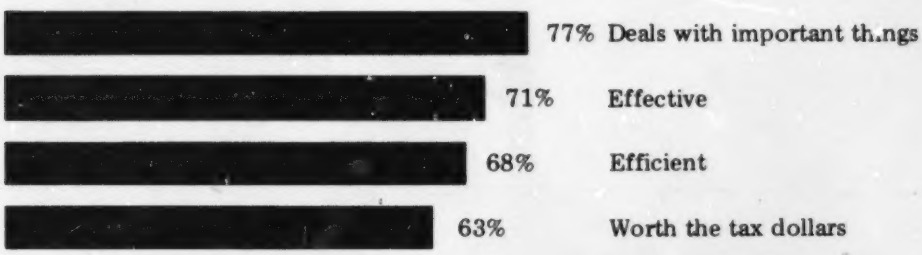
- Most leaders thought Extension did a good or excellent job.

  Leaders felt the results of Extension programs were:

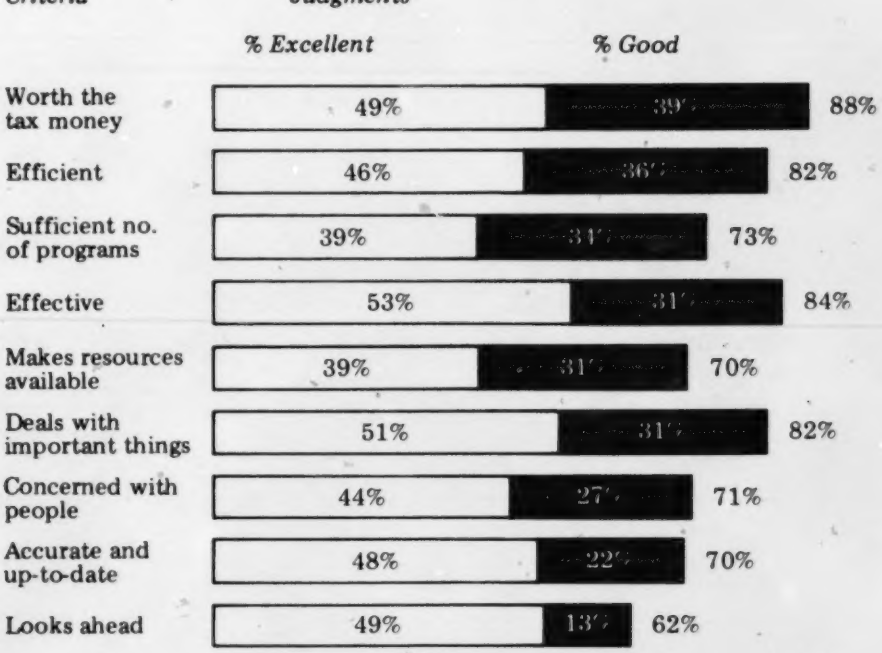


- Leaders made positive judgments about Extension operations.

  Leaders rated Extension as "good" or "excellent" on the following criteria:



- Considerable contact users (N=174) rated Extension as worth the tax dollars, efficient, and effective.



- **Participation greatly affected Extension support.**

  Almost all (99%) of those having considerable Extension contact felt that they or their families benefited in at least one of the six major benefit types. Over two-thirds felt they'd gotten "very much" benefit in at least one one area.

  Leaders' judgments about Extension's *worth in tax dollars* increased as their committee contact with local agents increased.

- People with considerable Extension contact judged most *methods* as helpful, but committees, courses, major events and individual agent contact were more helpful.

	A lot of help	*Some help*	*Little-no help*
Committee	78%	17%	5%
Courses	68	26	6
Major events	64	32	4
Individual agent contact	61	31	8
Agent presentation	44	49	7
Bulletin	38	43	19
Radio, newspaper	37	53	10
ETN	24	62	14

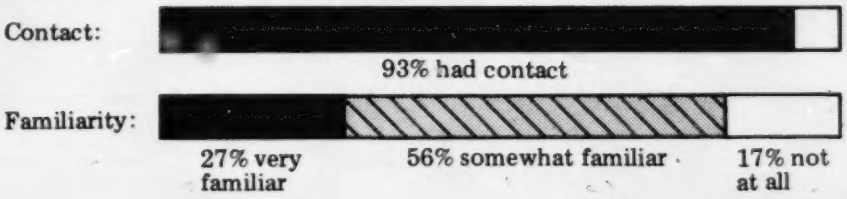
5. Extension lacks sufficient image and identity in Shawano County.

- Leaders characterized Extension as "University of Wisconsin" and "education" more than other identities.

  The immediate impression of Extension was learned through responses to the open-ended first question, "What is Extension?"

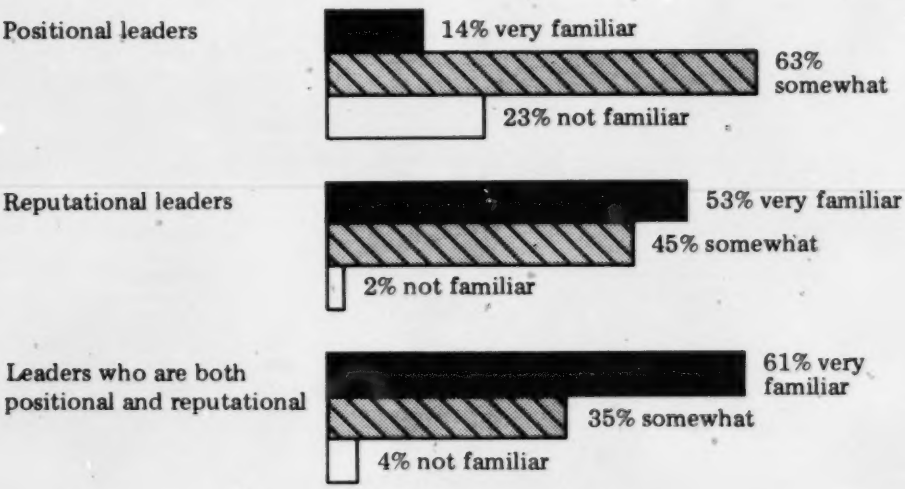
Extension is:	Education	37%	
	University of Wisconsin	32	
	A service	28	(multiple responses
	Community betterment	16	included)
	Agricultural	12	
	Reaching out	8	

- Even though most leaders had contact, less than one-third were very familiar with Extension.



Leaders holding elected or appointed offices were less acquainted with Extension than were persons named by knowledgeable residents: reputational leaders. Those holding office who were also named as influentials were the most familiar with Extension.

Familiarity with Extension by type of leadership:



- Extension did not have appropriate and sufficient identity for all Shawano County people.

  Although 76% had contact, 66% of the adults interviewed claimed they weren't familiar with Extension.
  24% of adult citizens don't use Extension.
  6% of residents interviewed did not recognize agents by title, but did by name.

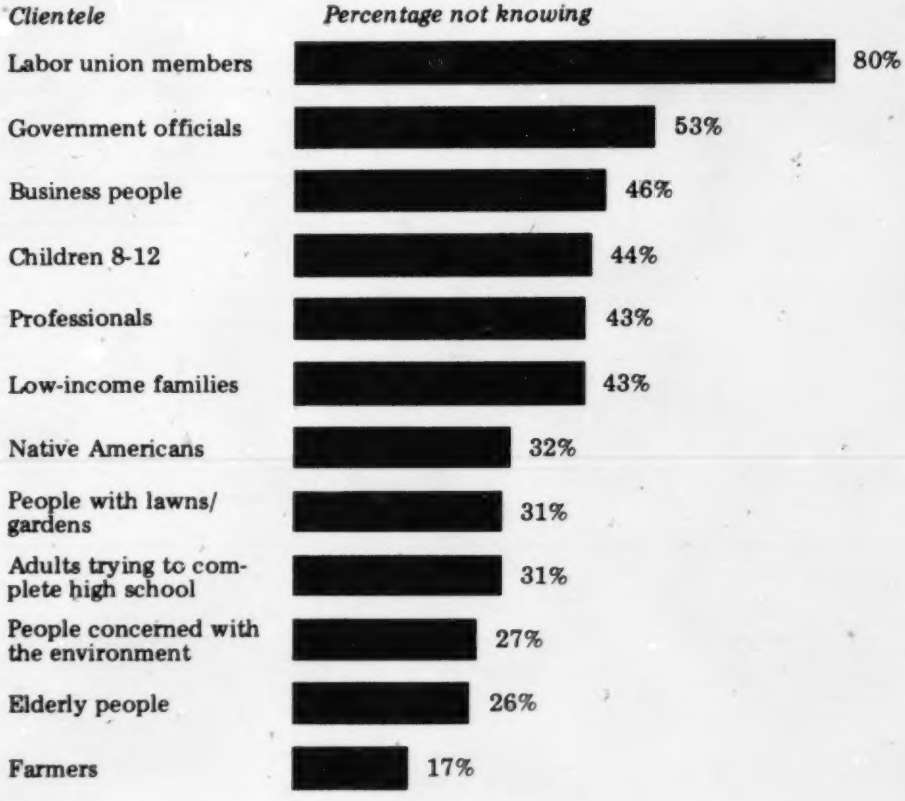
- Although 51% of the total county survey had contact with 4-H, many did not associate the 4-H program with Extension.

  78% of 4-H parents interviewed said they had little or no contact with Extension during the past 15 years.
  75% of former 4-H members said they had little or no contact.
  51% of 4-H leaders reported little or no Extension contact between 1960-1975.

- Many did not know what programs Extension offered.

  The most often given suggestion for improving Extension programs was to "do more publicity"—people feel they need more information about what is offered.

- Many with considerable contact with Extension said they didn't know how well Extension served certain clientele.



6. Leaders want to be more involved in program determination and evaluation.

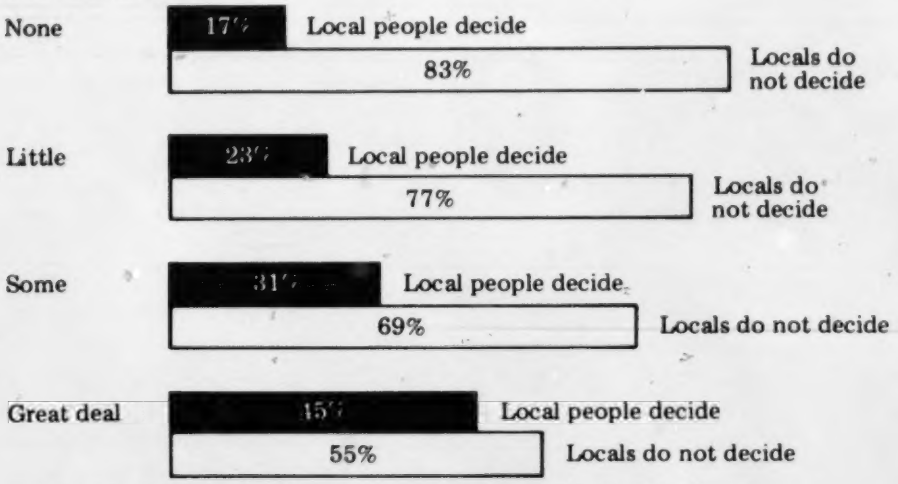
- More leaders felt that agents and state Extension decided about programs than did local people.

		(multiple responses included)
Percentage of leaders who believe the following groups make decisions about Extension	32%	local leaders
	33%	local people
	48%	local agents
	50%	state Extension

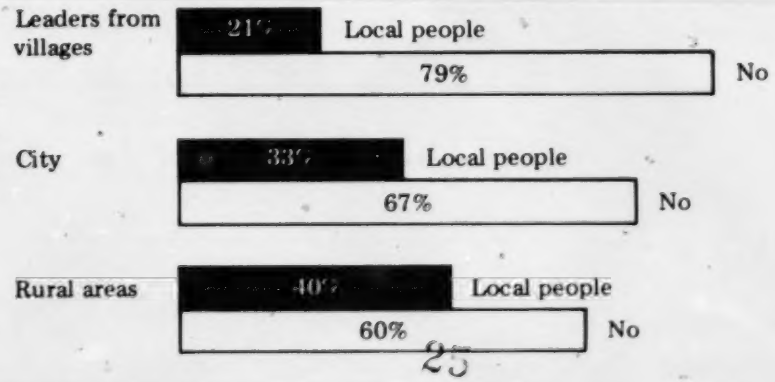
- Beliefs about who makes program decisions vary according to both the amount of Extension contact and place of leaders' residence.

Leaders who were actively involved with Extension through local committee contact felt close to the decision making:

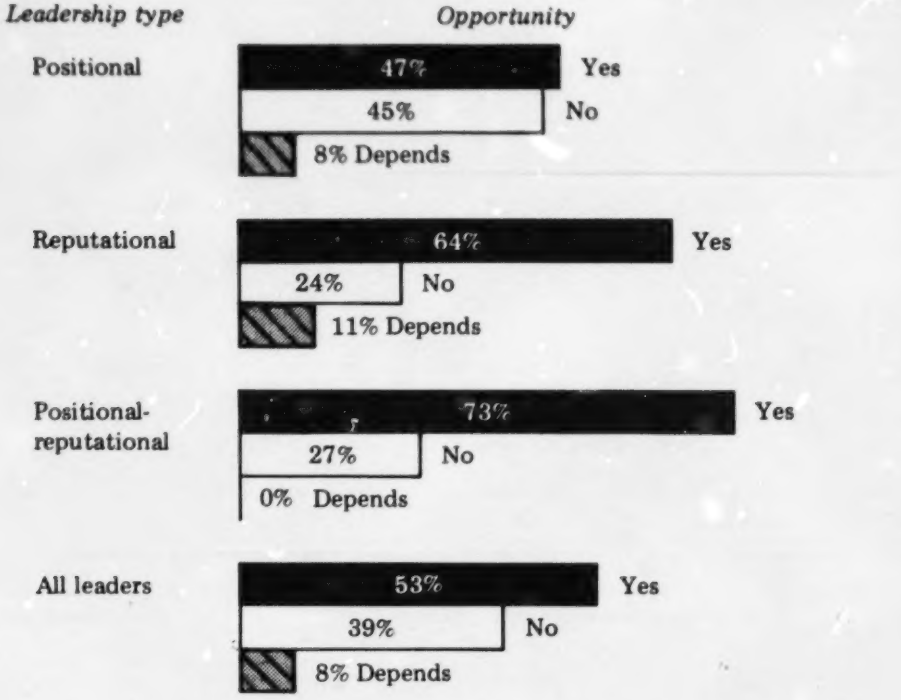
Amount of local committee contact



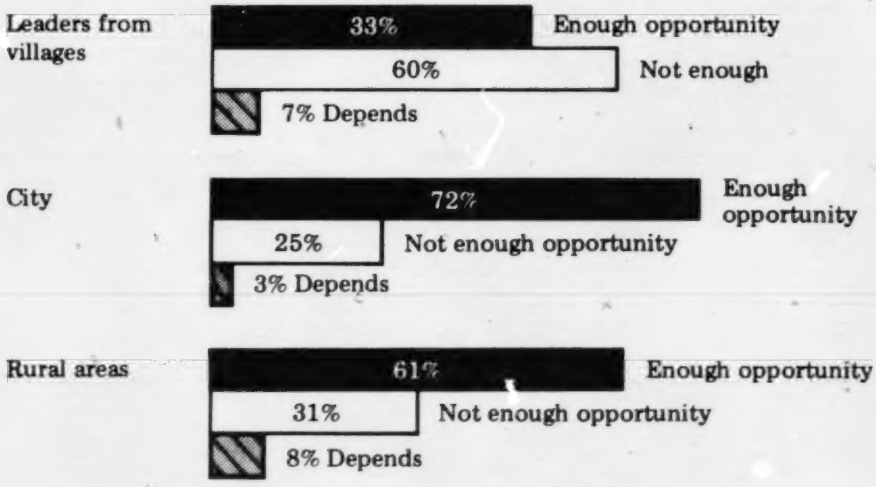
But leaders from the small villages were less likely to feel that local people made decisions about Extension programs.



- Many leaders felt they did not have enough opportunity to influence Extension programs.

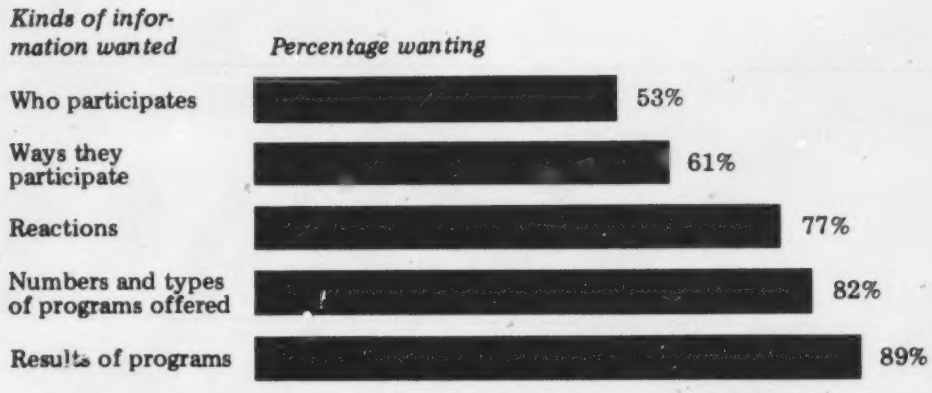


The opportunity to influence was affected by where the leader lived:

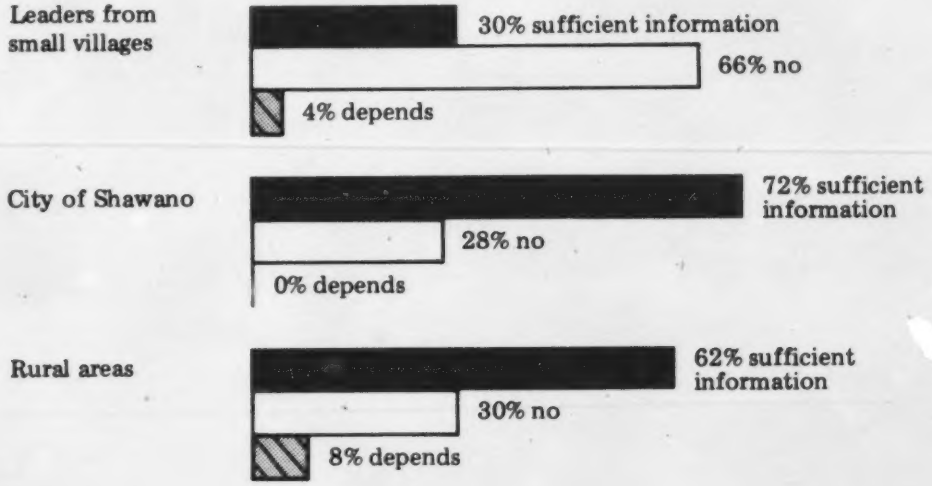


- Leaders want "results" information through short reports.

  The majority wanted to get information from short written reports (86%) or through mass media (63%).



Leaders vary on having enough information by their place of residence:



7. Program evaluation criteria are vague and inconsistent.

- Extension personnel's standards varied greatly as to what percentage of people should have Extension contact.

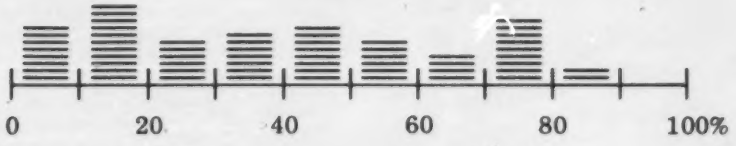
  Sixty-two faculty, locally and state-based, had a variety of expectations on what constitutes an adequate (successful) program. For example, the range of standards about *any Extension contact* was from 18% to 100%, with the distribution as follows:

Median—65%
Mean—62%
Range—18-100%

No clear indication of sufficient *contact through a local agent* could be determined by standards Extension personnel set.

Median—50%
Mean—38%
Range—10-100%

Extension faculty had lower minimum acceptance levels for low-income people, who are considered hard to reach.



Median—40%
Mean—43%
Range—5-90%

- Various reasons were given for judging Extension programs.

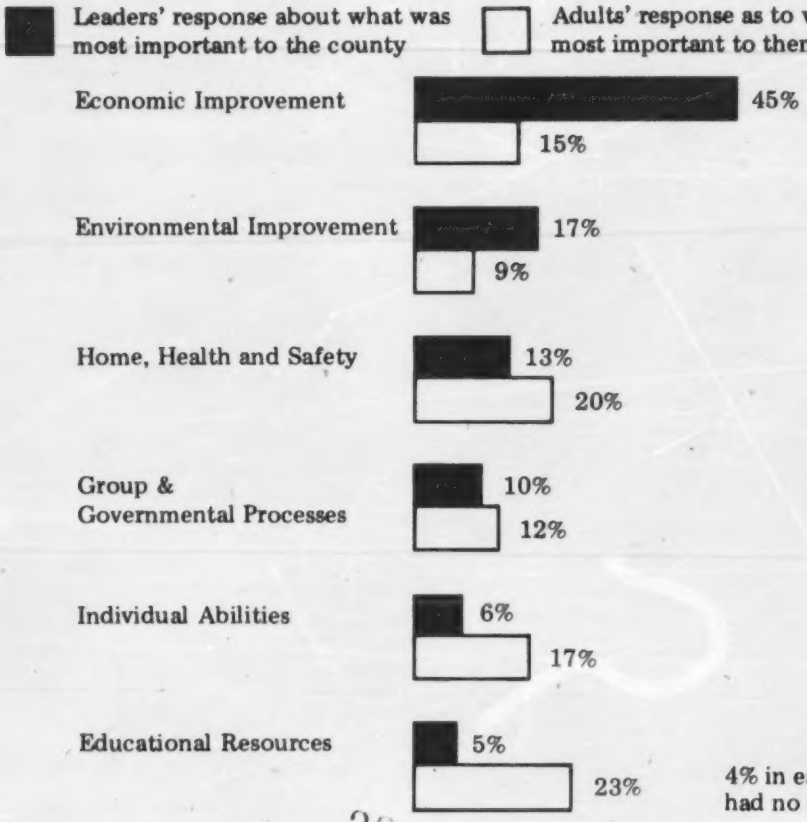
  Leaders identified reasons they felt were important for judging the results gained from Extension. These reasons were of seven types:

Reason	*Percent of leaders identifying*
Personnel	14%
Relevance	13
Usage	13
Kinds of programs	11
Learning	10
General value	8
Cost	5
Other	7

  Almost all (99%) of those with considerable Extension contact said the help they'd received was worth their time. The reasons for this assessment included six general kinds:

Saved time, money or effort	Expanded horizons
Gave individual satisfaction	Enabled me to help others
Provided solutions or needed help	Helped with my job

- Leaders and other adult respondents differed as to which types of benefits are most important.

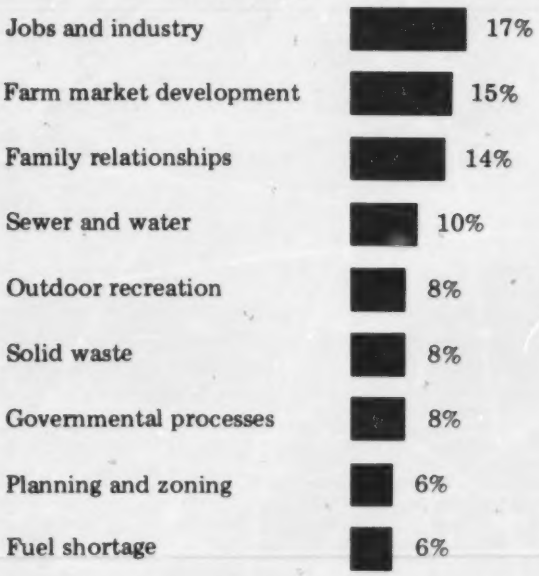


4% in each group had no response.

- Leaders felt that certain programs were more important than others.

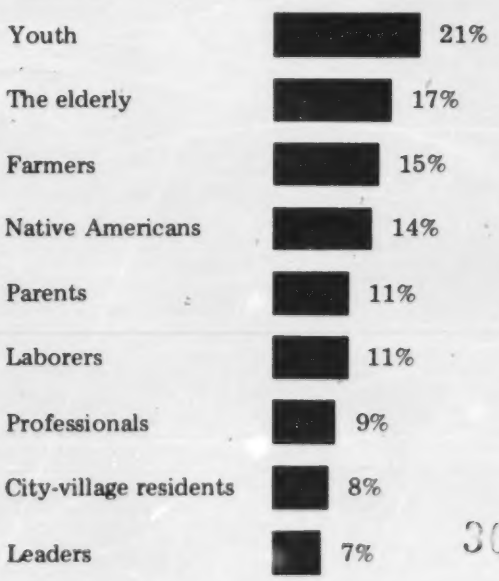
  Consistent with leaders' views about economic criteria being most important, leaders felt that jobs and industry and farm market development needed to be emphasized, given limited resources.

Percentage of leaders saying more should be done on these problem areas



- Given limited resources, leaders thought Extension should do more programming with certain groups.

Percentage of leaders indicating more emphasis on



Implications

The specific findings and general conclusions, when combined with further assumptions about Extension work, lead toward 10 general implications for Extension programming.

A major underlying assumption of all these is that Extension's future success rests on its ability and willingness to consider implications such as the 10 included here.

Although not statistically generalizable to other counties and states, the findings, conclusions, and implications from Shawano may nevertheless be useful as other counties and states review their programs.

1. Extension must decide the optimum balance between *some* contact with most people and *intensive* contact with fewer people.

Assumptions

1. The likelihood of increasing visible impact on community and individual problems is higher if Extension concentrates its resources on reaching certain groups or in dealing with specific problem areas.
2. Mass media can reach many people more efficiently than can individual and group contacts.
3. Being tax supported, Extension is obligated to provide equal access to its programs for all people.
4. Extension can continue to expect limited resources.

Evidence

1. Seventy-six percent of adults had contact with existing staff.
2. Fifteen percent of all Shawano's adult residents (or 800 people) had *intensive* contact over the 15-year period.
3. Leaders desired Extension agents to be involved in programs from start to finish.
4. Judgments about Extension's importance, effectiveness, and worth by leaders and the public were much more positive as contacts increased.
5. Extension staff members' perceptions varied on acceptable amounts of contact for success.

Discussion

Current staff cannot be expected to reach a larger percentage of people and at the same time concentrate more time on major problems. The situation is extremely frustrating to Extension staff when unsure of optimum balance or expected direction. They are encouraged to set priorities so as to cause more visible results for accountability purposes, but they are also expected to respond to all requests and to reach the 24% who are unreached. These conflicting pressures come from both local leadership and Extension administration.

In making this decision, Extension must create and use new media, new cooperative work relationships, and new expectations within its own structure and among clientele.

2. Extension must decide on the extent of its responsibility for assisting people who do not usually seek help.

Assumptions

1. Extension is obligated to provide program opportunities to everyone.
2. Some people are more self-initiating, request more help than others, and are thus easier to assist.
3. People with little or no prior contact are less likely to use Extension in the future.

Evidence

1. Twenty-four percent of citizens have had no Extension contact.
2. People who do not usually contact authorities when needing information have had little contact with Extension.
3. Residents of small villages and farther distances from the local Extension office were much less likely to have had contact.
4. Older, less formally educated, and lower-income citizens have had less contact with Extension.
5. Leaders desired more programming for elderly and village residents.
6. People with occupations other than farming, the professions, and business were less likely to have contact.
7. Many people were unaware of Extension's programs.

Discussion

Is Extension obligated to respond only to people who "want" help? Is Extension responsible for initiating programs with those not accustomed to using it? Although comprising 33% of the population, only 15% in the 60 and older group (who have less income, less education, and proportionately more problems) had contact with Extension. Programming for these groups will be less efficient (contacts per time), may be less rewarding at first, and may receive negative feedback from traditional audiences. Nevertheless, the decision must be made.

3. Extension must use strategic combinations of meetings, mass media, committee and individual contacts in sequential, continuous programming.

Assumptions

1. Extension methods differ as to the educational purposes they best serve.
2. Optimum combinations can be identified.

Evidence

1. Twenty-nine percent of people had contact *only* through mass media.
2. Sixty-four percent of the people had Extension contact through newspapers.
3. Extension radio and TV programs reached 51% of citizens.
4. Mass media were more efficient than other methods in reaching higher percentages of people.
5. Contacts through committees, courses, major events, and individual agents were perceived to be much more helpful than mass media.
6. Eighty-two percent of the considerable contact respondents shared information with others.
7. Contacts with local agents were related to positive judgments about Extension.
8. Leaders' judgments of Extension were highly related to personal and committee participation.
9. Leaders preferred the community development agent to be involved in a program from start to finish.
10. Major program efforts were achieved by programming sequentially on the same topics year by year, not by allocating large amounts of time within one year.

Discussion

Extension presentations through commercial television, radio, and newspapers must be interesting and effective. They can create more awareness of Extension, generate interest in programs, and provide factual information to people without other forms of contact. Media contacts must be preceded, supplemented, and followed by intensive, useful, and effective informal learning contacts on the same topics. Furthermore, Extension must help people share this learning, to generate interest and participation in sequential programs among other populations. Closer coordination between ETN, correspondence courses, and other continuing education offerings with local Extension programs will also lead to more awareness and impact.

4. A county program must be defined as combined efforts of local agents *and* other state-wide and district faculty.

Assumptions

1. Some tendency exists to consider the county program as the work of the local agents.
2. Much work by statewide faculty is independent of local programs.
3. Some people in certain parts of Shawano County have easier access to radio, TV, newspapers, and Extension offices in adjoining counties than in their own county.
4. Limited communication between two levels of Extension programs due to separated bases of operation contributes to frustration, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness.
5. Close relationships between locally perceived problems and available knowledge at campuses is necessary for program development.

Evidence

1. Much helpful contact existed between local citizens and non-local Extension staff.
2. The most helpful contacts were local committees, personal contacts, and courses.
3. Many citizens had contact with Extension outside of county borders.
4. Thirty-nine percent of leaders did not feel they had enough opportunity to influence program decisions.

Discussion

The key to increasing the acceptance and usage of Extension in a county is to see it as a total program, including both local *and* state inputs. Limited budgets do not allow for competition between state and local faculty on control and implementation of a program in a county. Local staff must help residents recognize that they get much more for their tax dollar than five local agents. Counties get most of their printed material, ETN, independent study courses, mass media, and back-up help from non-local University Extension sources.

Statewide faculty, on the other hand, must realize that inputs from local citizens and leaders, as well as local staff, enhance the successes of their more specialized statewide programs in any particular county.

5. Extension must attend to problems of individuals and to concerns needing group or governmental action.

Assumptions

1. Problems are different. Some are group or community concerns and some are individual ones.
2. Extension traditionally helps both individuals and groups to help themselves.
3. Many of today's problems can be solved only through community action.

Evidence

1. Almost all respondents related how Extension helped them as individuals.
2. Extension in Shawano County helped develop many community institutions such as parks, livestock market, minibus, and low-income housing.
3. Over 40% of Shawano County leaders perceived that Extension helped a great deal on planning and zoning, outdoor recreation, sewer and water planning, and solid waste disposal.
4. Extension was the most influential source of information to leaders on land use planning and recreation.

Discussion

Extension must decide the proportion of time and effort going into various levels of problems (individual, group, community, county). It can contribute to all levels, but the question is: at which level(s) will Extension add more to the lives of people?

All program areas must address the question. Leaders are involved in all aspects of the community and welcome Extension assistance in any of them. Statewide faculty should give more help in identifying problems that can be handled individually and those that need to be addressed by group action.

6. Extension must focus more on the needs of the "whole" person.

Assumptions

1. Individuals have their own "program" of activities, only part of which is Extension related.
2. Extension's relevance depends on how people perceive it in relation to their personal concerns.
3. Specialized programming tends to address only parts of the "whole" self.

Evidence

1. People having considerable contact with Extension were involved in several Extension programs. For example, farm families used Extension in relation to 4-H, occupation, leisure, and farm interests.
2. Eighty percent of leaders perceived themselves to be involved in all aspects of Shawano County interests.

Discussion

Extension specialists and faculty in subject-matter disciplines tend to see clients from only one perspective. Extension must help clients bridge from the specialized program to their other interests and to other Extension program opportunities. For instance, Extension faculty must also help leaders and other citizens see the relationship of economic related programming to other aspects of community and personal life. The likelihood of leaders accepting educational programs is much higher if they can see these as contributing to economic benefits. Leaders must see that Extension program development complements their values.

7. Extension must address specific immediate concerns of individuals and communities, and help people relate outcomes to larger goals.

Assumptions

1. Extension is accountable to individual clients on specific requests and to citizens and legislators on achieving general goals.
2. All specific problems and benefits of Extension fit within broad, long-range benefits.
3. Individuals and families are more likely to see specific results than general benefits.
4. Extension helps people help themselves when it relates everyday action to larger long-range benefits.
5. The real value of total Extension will be known only when it can sum up specific results or directly assess broad, general results.

Evidence

1. Citizens and leaders gave many specific examples of Extension help.
2. Citizens and leaders perceived benefits for all aspects of their lives from Extension.

Discussion

Extension must remain both practical and academically solvent. Can Extension only inform people on technical questions like "What is the fertilizer grade for growing corn on silt loam?" and "Can a pear tree be planted in Shawano County?" Or is Extension obligated to relate the answers to these particular questions to bigger goals and benefits such as economics, environment, or democratic procedures, and to show how the specific information may lead to several larger benefits?

8. Extension must recognize the difficulty in setting program priorities when communities and individuals are truly involved.

Assumptions

1. All people must be involved in determining their own goals and activities.
2. People are unique. All do not value the same beliefs to the same extent.

Evidence

1. Forty-seven percent of the leaders felt economic benefits were most crucial to Shawano County.
2. Twenty-three percent of adults felt education was the most crucial benefit to Shawano.
3. Only 6% of the leaders perceived education to be crucial.
4. Leaders judged results against criteria such as learning, usage, relevance, and personnel.
5. Leaders thought youth, the elderly, jobs and industry, and farm market development should get increased attention.
6. Citizens varied greatly on needed programs and did not agree with leaders.

Discussion

With little consensus as to program priorities, Extension will have to be patient and thorough in identifying and clarifying needs and in deciding on possible programs. Extension and citizens must be clear on their reasons for deciding programs, identifying goals, and selecting criteria. Ample discussion will help increase understanding, deter unnecessary conflict, increase credibility, and aid program support.

9. Criteria for evaluating programs must be clarified.

Assumptions

1. Success is known when one knows what is desired and how much is acceptable.
2. Decisions are made when one knows the point at which one alternative is selected over another.
3. Data are meaningless unless related to some reference point.
4. Groups and individuals differ in judgments more because of not having a common criterion than because of different perceptions of facts.
5. Unless Extension and clientele can jointly identify and communicate what is to be defined as success, they will not be able to deal with the question of accountability, either internally or externally.
6. Evaluation is the comparison of "what is" (Shawano evaluation data) and "what should be" (standards), and then making a judgment.

Evidence

1. Extension staff did not agree on what should be or on the definition of success.
2. Only 29% of leaders judged program results to be "excellent."
3. Leaders felt certain programs and groups should receive more emphasis even with limited resources.

Discussion

This evaluation showed that Extension has given little conscious thought to how good is "good," or to the limitations and potentials of county Extension programming. In addition, Extension does not know the minimum acceptable standards of leaders and citizens or what respondents mean by "excellence." Thus, before moving to further usage of these results or any other evaluation, an awareness and learning program needs to occur. These discrepancies on standards are in part due to few comparable studies. Thus, these findings can serve as a beginning of understanding and as a benchmark for similar evaluations in the future.

10. Understanding of Extension must be increased by giving people more opportunity to be involved.

Assumptions

1. Awareness is prior to interest and acceptance.
2. Interest is prior to participation in programs.
3. Awareness, interest, and satisfying participation are necessary if citizens are to support Extension with tax dollars.

Evidence

1. Leaders see Extension as education, the university, and service.
2. Eighty-three percent of leaders were familiar with Extension, but only 27% were very familiar.
3. Sixty-six percent of adults said they weren't familiar with Extension.
4. Seventy-eight percent of 4-H parents said they had little or no Extension contact.
5. Shawano County Extension has had "extensive" local newspaper coverage.
6. Leaders wanted more information on actual results of programs.
7. Leaders wanted information informally and through short written reports.
8. Thirty-two percent of leaders felt local people make decisions on programs, whereas 50% felt the state Extension decides.
9. Thirty-nine percent of leaders felt they did not have enough opportunity to influence programs.
10. Much committee contact and involvement by leaders strongly related to positive judgments.

Discussion

Although Extension in Shawano has had extensive mass media coverage, some are still unaware of its programs, particularly the non-traditional offerings. With rising taxes, the public wants to know how its monies are spent and what are the results. Unless Extension communicates better than at present, it may lose dollars to competing agencies and programs. Program promotion must be identified as UW-Extension.

Leaders in particular need to be more involved in program development. They must feel an opportunity to influence and that constituents are benefitting. Local involvement of key people has been espoused for years by Extension. This evaluation gave documentation of benefits from such involvement. Thus Extension has added incentive for increasing the practice.

Additional Materials

Set of 8 Impact Summaries

(Extension in Shawano County, Leaders in Shawano County, 4-H, Farmers, Professionals, Families, Elderly, Business People)

From the Total County Survey

Total County Impact Reports
- #1 — Contact with Extension
- #2 — Results of Contact with Extension
- #3 — Reactions to Extension

Specific Clientele or Program Reports
- Farmers
- Business People
- Professionals
- Elderly
- Native Americans
- Low Income
- Home Economics
- 4-H (Parents, Leaders, Alumni)

Specific Extension Methods Reports
- Mass Media
- Meetings
- Individual Contact

Selected Analyses According to Demographic Variables
- Age
- Income
- Education
- Ethnic Background
- Occupation
- Place of Residence
- Location in County
- Sex
- Orientation Toward Contacting an Authority

Effect of Orientation Toward Contacting an Authority

Data Patterns and Meanings

Comments Based on the Shawano Project Data
(3-page summary presented to Wisconsin Extension administrative group)

page 42 blank

Standards

Standards and Criteria in Evaluating Extension's Impact

From the Leadership Survey

Shawano County Leaders: A Profile and Summary of Reactions to Extension Compared to Randomly Selected Citizens

Shawano County Leaders: Perceptions of Extension Benefits

Shawano County Leaders: Judgments About Extension

Shawano County Leaders: Involvement in Evaluation and Accountability Processes

Shawano County Leaders: Involvement in Community and Extension Programs

Shawano County Leaders: Perceptions of the Community and Resource Development Agent's Role

Shawano County Leaders: An Evaluation of Outdoor Recreation Programs

Shawano County Leaders: An Evaluation of Land Use Planning Education Programs

Shawano County Leaders: An Evaluation of Industrial Development Programs Programs

Major Reports in this series: Impact of Extension in Shawano County

1. Conclusions & Implications
2. Methodology
3. Usage

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